An Inaugural Dissertation

on

Cynanche Trachealis

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by

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Until the present century this disease was confounded with whooping cough, asthma, and bronchitis, and the fatal cases were supposed to be violent forms of one of these maladies.

In the hands of the Allopath, croup has ever proved a most formidable and fatal disease, and rarely succumbs to his barbaric treatment; but in this as well as in every other disease, Homoeopathy has shown its efficiency and entire superiority over every other system of medicine that has come before the world; and it is in such diseases as this that pure Hahnemanism has been tested and its results proved highly satisfactory bringing speedy relief.

to the little sufferer and joy to the heart of many an anxious parent.

Croup rarely occurs after the age of seven years, and may therefore be considered a disease peculiar to childhood, although solitary cases have occurred, in which adults have suffered from it, still these cases are so rare as to form only occasional exceptions; why it is so we are unable to tell, we only know that experience teaches us its attacks are almost entirely confined to children, and on this account it is more to be dreaded, and demands such prompt treatment that every conscientious practitioner should have a thorough knowledge of

its nature and character, so as to be ready to meet and arrest its progress by scientific Homoeopathic treatment.

Croup is inflamation of the mucous membrane of the larynx and trachea, but it is something more. It is a spasmodic action of the muscles of the larynx, which spasmodic action gives rise to much of the peculiar cough, the stridor, and the paroxysms of dyspnoea so characteristic of the disease. As this disease is composed as it were of several distinct elements, it differs somewhat according as one or both of these elements preponderate, thus the inflamation may be comparatively slight, yet the spasm play a very prominent part; or the inflamation

may be very severe and result in the formation of a false membrane.

To the first class belongs the disorder known as false croup, catarrhal croup, stridulous laryngitis, spasmodic laryngitis; to the second, the true croup or pseudo-membranous laryngitis.

Diagnosis. Some writers have distinguished four distinct varieties, each one forming a distinct and independent disease, and not liable to run into either of the other forms.

It is doubtless true that these several varieties do often exist as distinct and clearly defined maladies, and that the remedies homoeopathic to these varieties are almost entirely distinct, but it is by no means certain that different forms do not run into each other. Be this as it

may), as far as the treatment is concerned, it matters little to us which form of the disease we have to treat, if we but follow Hahnemann's rule and give the remedy indicated by the symptoms, but I would say for the satisfaction of parents and nurses, it is very desirable that we as physicians should be able to form a correct diagnosis, of every case we may have to treat, it inspires more confidence on the part of those who may not understand our doctrine of symptomatology, and while it is a fact that the diagnosis affords us very little if any aid in the selection of the proper homoeopathic remedy, yet for obvious reasons I deem it very important

that we should possess a fair knowledge of diagnosis, and especially those of us who are just starting out in practice, and have a reputation to establish by our own efforts.

As was stated some writers have distinguished four distinct varieties, but among these there are two principal ones, first; the <u>false</u>, or <u>non membranous</u>, comprising under this head the <u>spasmodic</u>, <u>catarrhal</u> and <u>slightly inflamatory</u> kinds; and second the <u>true</u> or <u>membranous</u> croup.

<u>False croup</u>. This is one of the most common diseases of childhood, its seizures happen frequently at night, and the child that goes to bed well, or perhaps a little

fretful, or with a slight catarrh, wakes suddenly in a great state of alarm, with considerable difficulty of breathing, noisy and wheezing inspirations, a short dry, hoarse cough, and almost an entire absence of febrile symptoms. The paroxysm continues in this way for about an hour, when the breathing becomes easier and the little patient falls asleep; a second attack however is apt to follow towards morning, or the child may escape this altogether, and the inflamation subside with a little hoarseness. As before stated the main element in the production of false croup is spasm of the glottis, and although the symptoms may be somewhat alarming it

rarely proves fatal.

Catarrhal Croup also commences suddenly, with a croupy cough, hoarse voice, shrill, wheezing and sonorous inspirations, oppression and tightness at the chest, and sudden attacks of dyspnoea, but in a few days the croupy character will wear off, leaving nothing but catarrhal symptoms behind.

In the simple inflamatory croup, we have sore throat, some thirst, and nightly febrile exacerbations, this like the preceding variety, will often wear off spontaneously leaving only some slight symptoms behind. An important peculiarity in all the varieties of false croup, consists in the suddenness of their attacks,

and are much less to be dreaded than those which make their appearance in a slow and insidious manner as is the case with true croup.

True Croup This is a formidable disease, in which there is not only inflamation, but inflamation which results in the formation of a false membrane. The plastic exudation is found lining the larynx, extending into the trachea or down into the bronchial tubes, and is seen in the fauces and on the tonsils.

Symptoms - The disease usually begins with or rather is preceded by, slight fever and catarrh, and some hoarseness. This may last for a few days, when the symptoms

peculiar to croup manifest themselves. The cough attracts attention by its ringing sound, and at the same time or shortly after, the characteristic croupal respiration is perceived. High fever and difficulty in breathing soon set in; and although exhibiting exacerbations and remissions, only cease when the disease ceases.

There is much thirst, no appetite, but what is taken is readily swallowed. The voice is changed almost from the onset, it is hoarse and whispering, and often as the disease advances becomes totally suppressed. The child remains in this condition often for several days, restless with its head thrown back, respiration labored, and

the croupal sound never entirely disappearing). Sometimes solid masses of the membrane are coughed up, finally the cough ceases the paroxysms of dyspnoea cease, the extremities become cold, sensibility is diminished, and unless prompt relief be afforded by the administration of the proper Homoeopathic remedy or an operation be performed, the little sufferer dies comatose or suffocated. The fatal termination is not unfrequently hastened by an intervening attack of pneumonia or bronchitis, this fact should put us on our guard, auscultation in such cases affords us valuable aid, while it will not help us to determine the exact position of the membrane.

Croup is a disease not apt to be mistaken, but we must not attach too much importance to any one symptom; but when we take them all collectively, the peculiar respiration, the ringing cough, the dyspnoea aggravated in paroxysms, the expectoration, fever, changed voice, and short duration of the disease, we may be certain that we have a case of true croup.

Causes - Exposure to a cold damp atmosphere, wet feet, the air from lakes and seas. There seems to be a predisposition in some families to this disease, while others again are never attacked with it. Sometimes it follows as a sequence of Scarlatina and

measles or other exanthemata, and from this fact has originated the idea of its being contagious.

Treatment - For the various forms of false croup the following remedies have proved useful - Aconit. Spongia. Belladonna. Ipecac. Tart: Emet: Hepar. Sulph. Lach. Samb. Cham. Nux.

True or membranous croup - Kali Bich. Brom. Hepar Sulph. Samb. Spongia Iodine, Tart: Emet: and Lach.

Kali Bichromacum croup - Worse about 3 or 4 A. M., inflamed fauces, metallic cough, membranous deposit.

Bromine - Mucous rattling, wheezing; increased secretion of urine

Spongia - Dry croupy sound of cough, worse in the evening, sawing sound of respiration followed well by Brom.

Hepar - Cough worse in the morning, hoarseness, or dry barking cough, or at a later stage when there is perspiration about the head and face.
Iodine - Follows well after hepar, worse in the morning, rattling of tough phlegm, hoarseness, especially suitable for patients with black eyes and hair.
Tart. Emet. - Cold bluish face, cold perspiration, rattling in the chest, great sinking of strength.

I have had three cases of membranous croup, two of which recovered but the third died, I was not called to see the latter untill the fourth day of the disease, and when in fact it was too late to arrest the progress of the disease. I found the child an inter-

esting little girl six years of age, gasping and struggling for breath, face red, skin hot and dry, voice reduced to a hoarse whisper, very restless tossing about, with an occasional attack of coughing, (hoarse dry cough) I dissolved some pellets of Aeon. 200 in water and gave a dose every fifteen minutes ordered a warm bath, and in the course of two or three hours I saw her again, when the symptoms seemed to call for Hepar which I gave, but notwithstanding all my efforts she continued to grow worse, and died in about twelve hours after I first saw her.

The application of a wet linen cloth to the throat with a piece of flannel outside is

~~it~~ recommended by some physicians and I think I have seen good effect follow its use. As to tracheotomy it is an operation which has rarely proved successful on account of the great difficulty of ascertaining exactly, where the pseudo membrane is, and the liability of the bronchae to be affected. I have more faith in the Homoeopathic remedy specific to the case, than in any external application or surgical operation.